THE

WITNESS.

MEMOIRS OF REV. JOHN GANO.

[The following is a short extract from the Life of JOHN GANO, an eminent servant of Christ, principally written by himself. Printed at New-York, for John Tiebout; with a preface by his Son, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Providence. A book which we recommend to the perusal of our readers.]

MY mother being a pious Baptist, which she publickly professed in her youth, and my father being a steady Presbyterian, took care that I was made well acquainted with the Westminster confession of faith and catechism, which before my conversion, summoned my attention to preaching. If the sentiments I then heard disclosed answered to the doctrines in which I was taught, they met my approbation; and if not, my displeasure was the consequence.

In early life I had some severe convictions of sin, conscious I must die and go to judgment; and that I must be renewed by grace, or perish as a sinner. But these convictions were transient and of short duration. As I advanced in years, I progressed in youthful vanity and sin. I became exceedingly anxious to excel my companions in work and amusements, and especially in their country frolics and dances. I was frequently admonished by my parents for working to excess, but much more frequently for my attachment to vanity. I cannot charge myself with irreverence to my parents; but when my pious mother would expostulate with me, I seized the opportunity to vindicate

myself. One morning when I came into her presence, having been out late the night before, she fixed her eyes upon me, said not a word, and the pious parental tear stole down her cheek, which struck me with more conviction than I ever remembered to have felt before, which I could not eradicate by any reply, and which caused these reflections to sink deep in my mind: "Do my present follies cause so much pain to the most pious and most tender of parents, what must be the consequence, when they recoil on my own soul? Recoil they must, if not before, at least in the day of judgment; and there I must see this parent, whose tears now condole my case, smile an acquiescent consent in the dreadful sentence of eternal banishment from the righteous Judge." These reflections caused many resolutions, which were shamefully broken for a time; yet a sense of my dangerous situation would now and then fill my mind with melancholy sensations, and doth even *now*, while writing it.

When I was about fifteen years of age, my brother Stephen, who was then in his twentieth year, died. He was, before, and in the first part of his illness, deeply concerned for the salvation of his soul, of which, before his death, he professed a strong hope. When he expressed this hope, and what he said under his conviction, greatly engaged my resolution to seek an acquaintance if possible, with Christ. Probably great part of this exercise flowed from natural affections, as time gradually wore it away. This has caused me to omit many impressions which had some appearance of convictions, such as escapes, from apparent danger of death, by various means incidental to youth; the deaths of others, &c. &c. Between two and three years after this, the dysentery seized the family, excepting my father and myself. They were brought exceeding low, and a brother and two sisters fell victims to the disorder; one of whom was in her twentieth year. It was the more alarming to me, as it brought to my mind a prediction, which had been early imposed on my father, and which I had often heard him mention with apparent cheerfulness. Which prediction was, that he would have many children, (as in reality he had,) and that three of them should die in their twentieth year. As I was next in point of years, this thought continually haunted me, and made me sensible that I was not prepared for such an awful

change.* Whenever I could dispel those gloomy thoughts, I was more at ease, and more vile and vain than ever, which continued and even increased until the Christmas before I was nineteen years of age.

That time, I had determined to spend a jovial evening with my frolicking companions. As, however, there was a sermon to be preached on that day, near to the place where I lived, I concluded to attend both. After sermon, my mind turned on the inconsistency of my conduct, in spending the day where God was served, and the night in the service of the devil. This led me to consider more closely than ever, that if a day was regarded as the birth of Christ, a holy Saviour, through whom alone we could look for salvation,—how improper it was to spend it in open rebellion! This brought me to a resolution, that I would spend my time in a more consistent manner than I had done; and, blessed be God, before the year terminated, I was brought under serious impressions, which arose from a conversation with a person, whom I supposed really pious and sincere. He advanced something, which my own soul told me was just; but vainly supposing I could shake his belief, I readily undertook to argue with him, which so confused him, that he requested me to stop; with which I cheerfully complied, being fully satisfied with the victory I had obtained. We parted, and in a few minutes it occurred to my mind, that I had acted improperly; that I had been instigated by the devil, to oppose truth and glory. I appeared to myself to be a worshipper of Satan; and it seemed that all the advantages I possessed, were employed to the dishonour of God; and I thought it was a miracle of mercy and grace, that he did not make me an everlasting monument of his displeasure. It became my ardent wish, that if there was a possibility of pardon for my sins and transgressions, I might not rest either night or day until I obtained it: which was in some measure the case, although my trials under conviction were of long continuance. I embraced every opportunity in my power, in attending preaching, reading godly books, and praying either mentally or aloud. There was a total change in my company and

* My next younger brother, soon after this, died in the twentieth year of his age.

conduct. But I soon found by experience, what I had early learned from my Bible, that a change of heart was necessary; and that the power of God's grace only could accomplish it; which, I was afraid, would never be granted. I was, however, determined to seek it to the latest hour of my existence. I cannot express the anguish, with which my mind was frequently oppressed, with the idea of being eternally banished from God, in endless despair, to everlasting destruction. I saw I deserved it, and at times concluded it was unavoidable. My prayers were selfish and sinful. I often thought that I offended God in asking for pardon, when justice appeared so pointedly against it. In short, I appeared to myself the vilest of sinners, more worthless and odious than the meanest reptile, and the greatest hypocrite in the world. It appeared that what I felt was only natural remorse, and not a genuine conviction that God's wrath was the prelude of his lasting displeasure. Impressed with these feelings, I concluded I was willing to be saved, and that if I waited the assistance of God, it was all I could do; for it was by his grace that I could be saved. This in some measure afforded me a kind of deluded ease, until I heard a sermon from these words, in Solomon's Song, iii. 11. "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon," &c. From which discourse I plainly saw the alienation of my heart, that the fault was owing to myself if I was not saved, and that God was waiting to be gracious. Never before had I seen so much of the evil of my hard and obstinate heart.

From that time, the nature of my conviction was altered, and my grief was greater. I knew that I must be changed, and that it was to be effected by God, and that he would effect it was my most fervent wish. But how he could be just and save me I knew not: that he could be just and condemn me, appeared plain. In this state, I remained for some time. And it was some satisfaction to my mind, that God would secure his own glory, and the honour of his Son. In this temper of mind, the way of salvation, through the life, death, and mediation of the glorious Saviour, appeared plain. I contemplated on the amazing wisdom and goodness of God, and condescension of Christ. My soul was enraptured, amazed, and confounded, that with all my ingratitude, I could still be saved. My mind was enlighten-

ed, and my guilt and fear of punishment were removed. Yet, notwithstanding the alteration I felt, I am not sensible that I thought of its being a real conviction; I was afraid my convictions would not be lasting; and I prayed for a continuance of them. I was constrained at times to rejoice in God and his salvation; and in this state continued some time, until a sermon from these words, with light and power fastened on my mind: "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." I trust they were so applied that I could not put them from me. They opened the way of salvation, the suitableness, fulness, and willingness of God; and I was enabled to appropriate them to myself, and rejoice in Christ. This was the time, from which I dated my conversion, and I think I walked in the light of God's countenance, and had many blessed promises, which strengthened and confirmed my hope in, and humbled me before God.

About this time, there were a number of young people of my acquaintance in the neighbourhood, who were under serious concern for their souls, and as I had, in my distress, warned them of their exposure to the wrath of God, I could now point out to them Christ, and the method of salvation through him. As my soul felt what I said, it seemed as if God made them sensible of it. We assembled on evenings to pray and converse; and I now believe that this was a useful part of my life. I was inclined to become a preacher, but thought it my duty to wait and pursue literary acquirements. Indeed, I had not then made an open profession, or joined the church. For some reasons, I wished to join that of the Presbyterian; and as a communion season was approaching, I expected some examination. I took the Westminster confession of faith, and the Bible, with a view honestly to profess them. The doctrines appeared thoroughly grounded, and perfectly consonant with the Bible, until I came to the doctrine of baptism. The proofs there adduced, fell far short of my expectations, and appeared foreign to the point. I then took the Bible, especially the New Testament, and searched it for months together; and inquired for, and obtained all the disputes, especially in favour of infant baptism, that I could hear of; I, however, could find nothing that seemed to me to amount to a divine warrant. I went to a presbytery on purpose to converse with a Mr. Tennant, or rather

to be instructed by him. A favourable opportunity presented, and from my attachment to the man, and a deference to his opinion, and the confidence he appeared to have of the justice of infant baptism, I was induced to embrace his sentiments. But on my road home, it turned in my mind, that this was not the way I had obtained the hope of salvation, or consonant with my former resolutions, to make the word of God my only rule of faith and practice. Let Mr. Tennant be ever so good a man, his belief is not a divine warrant for me to act upon. Before I got home, I was determined to try farther to see for myself.

Soon after, Mr. Miller, a Baptist minister, inquiring of me why I did not profess Christ openly, and join some church, I told him my difficulty. He replied, that God's word and Spirit would direct me, and if I attended to them impartially, they would remove my doubts; and if they did not make me a Baptist, he did not wish to do it. This conversation led me to inquire if I had done so. I was soon convinced I had not; but had only searched for something to confirm me in the doctrine of infant baptism, which I had received from my education. I really think, that if any person was ever induced to take the word of God in hand, with a fervent desire to be free from all prepossessions, to see the truth as it really was, and to let the Bible be their guide, I was. A number of inconsistencies perplexed me in my infant baptism, and Providence gave me an opportunity to disclose some of them. I happened to spend an evening with Mr. Tennant, and some of my Presbyterian friends, when I was drawn into the conversation, from the supposition that I was the person who conversed with him at the presbytery. He asked me if I was yet satisfied, or wished to converse farther on the subject. I told him I did so, provided it would be agreeable to bring in all my objections; with which he complied. I then related to him the thoughts with which I left him, and those which occurred after, and mentioned, that after conversing with him, I had an opportunity of attending the baptism of a child, when the minister, in his prayer, uttered these words: "Lord bless so much of this element as is used in this ordinance, to the washing away of original pollution," which struck me very forcibly: he however condemned it. I also remarked to him,

that the minister in speaking, called it a seal of the covenant of grace, which I told him appeared to be saying too much of any external ordinance. That the blood of Christ was the seal, and that he also, in my view, was the covenant; and that God's word and Spirit applied to our consciences was a seal. I wished, if I was wrong, that he would put me right. I also mentioned, that I had my doubts, whether baptism was a substitute for circumcision, both being in use at the same time; and even ought to be, as "the cutting off of the Messiah," and the shedding of his blood, was pointed at in that ordinance till it was accomplished; that the same subjects relating to both were useless, if one was the substitute for the other. Their subjects were different, and the end and design of the ordinances appeared to me to be different. I mentioned these, and other difficulties, with a sincere desire of being instructed; but I had neither my doubts confirmed nor removed. I was, however, much pleased with the goodness and candour of the man, who closed with this address: "Dear young man, if the devil cannot destroy your soul, he will endeavour to destroy your comfort and usefulness; and therefore do not be always doubting in this matter. If you cannot think as I do, think for yourself." I then endeavoured to learn my duty from the New Testament, as being a New Testament ordinance, and found that it was from heaven, had its authority from God, and became binding by a positive command. The characters of those who were to be baptized, were, *disciples*, *penitent believers*, and such as had received the Holy Ghost. I could not find by any of the apostles' practice, that any others were encouraged or permitted, unless they intruded as Simon Magus did. And the apostles declared him to have no part nor lot in that matter. The end and design was to fulfil righteousness, to answer a good conscience. All things considered, I could see no ground for infant baptism in the New Testament. I next turned my attention to the mode, which appeared so plain in the example of Christ, in the places where he administered, and the reasons why he administered in those places, insomuch that I was soon established in the belief, that *immersion* was the only mode, which could be gathered from the New Testament; and with this mode my conscience pressed me to comply. I then addressed my father on the

subject. I told him "his constant religious care over me entitled him to all the gratitude I was capable of rendering; yet I must beg his indulgence. I believed he was conscientious in having me baptized in my infancy, as he had supposed, and I had tried to suppose it right. But, on the whole, I was convinced it was my duty to be baptized by immersion; and that it relied on the profession of my *own* faith, if the church would receive me." He replied, "that what he did he thought right and in discharge of his own conscience. If I was conscientious, (and he was thankful to God, that he had reason to believe I was, from his observance of my searching the scriptures and the time I had taken therein, and the books I had read) I had his full and free consent; and it was my duty to make profession.—That whenever I went to offer myself, he would go with me, and give the church his consent, and answer any inquiries respecting my life, if they chose to make any; and that he would go and see me baptized." This he did; and there were a number baptized with me. I believe from that time, my father changed his opinion on the subject, although he never confessed it, until a few months before his death; which happened in the eighty-seventh year of his age.

FOR THE WITNESS.

BEAUTY OF DIVINE TRUTH.

As it is an effect of the work of God on the soul, deeply to impress the reality of those things which are revealed in his word; so also, in this saving operation, the Holy Ghost imparts A CONVICTION OF HEART OF THE HOLY BEAUTY OF REVEALED TRUTH. In this particular, gracious persons entirely differ from all those who are under the dominion of sin.

The wicked may be the subjects of very powerful operations on their understandings, as to the certainty of future punishment, and the unreasonableness of their rebellion. They may discover much of the natural beauty of the works of creation, and of the wisdom and goodness of God in his government of the world. But their minds are totally

blinded as to the holy beauty in these displays of the divine character; and so far as they have any correct apprehensions of divine justice, and the righteous vengeance of God against sin, their hearts rise in enmity against him, and it is the language of their temper and conduct that they will not submit to his authority.

Exceedingly diverse from this are the views and exercises of those who are born from above. That in which they are supremely delighted is holiness. When by the teaching of the Spirit they realize the perfect holiness of the character of God, they heartily approve of his law, which commands them to love him with all the heart, soul, mind and strength. They clearly see that it is not an arbitrary expression of his will, founded in caprice; but the necessary display of his infinite benevolence. As his character is supremely amiable, they feel their obligation to be constantly under the influence of holy love; and were it in their power to abate or lessen the demands of this law, they would not on any consideration. Such an alteration would be so far from being desirable, that it would be in their view the greatest of all possible evils. This would be not only to dishonour God, but it would also be the destruction of their own blessedness; for at those seasons in which they are the most delivered from selfishness, and the most fixed in the love of God, they are the most happy. Were it possible that such a change in the moral law could be effected, it would imply imperfection in the divine character, and prove his want of wisdom in giving it; and this would demonstrate that he is not that amiable and glorious Being which he is declared to be in the scriptures. But no such idea can be established in their minds; for they know that "God is a rock: his work is perfect: a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he." They know that likeness to his moral image will satisfy their souls; nor can they rest in any attainment short of this.

As selfishness is an evil in their hearts which injures their peace, and is dishonorary to God, believers delight also in that command which enjoins them to love their neighbour as themselves. Nor are they pleased with it merely because it tends to their happiness; but the chief beauty which in this precept attracts their affection is this, that it exhibits God as having the holy right to command, and produces

order and love among the whole assembly of the saints; making the happiness of each individual the joint interest of the whole, and the felicity of the whole, the joy of each individual.

The way of salvation by Christ Jesus is also exceedingly precious to believers. In him, as God manifest in the flesh, they see the glory of the divine perfections. In his voluntary assumption of the human nature, that he might accomplish the work of Mediator, is an unparalleled display of condescension and love. In his holy life is manifested his regard to the precepts of the law; and in his fulfilment of its requirements, in the likeness of his brethren, may be seen the reasonableness of its requisitions. In his death on the cross, sin is condemned, and appears exceedingly sinful; and the justice of the curse on the transgressor is exhibited; for an apostle says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse *for us;* as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." This way of redemption is rendered exceedingly glorious by the dignity of the Redeemer, who is declared to be "over all, God blessed forever." It is a holy method of salvation in all its parts, communicating holiness to all who are the subjects of it, and is infinitely more precious than if it were procured, as some absurdly suppose it can be, by the obedience of a super-angelic or merely created Mediator, in connexion with the repentance of a sinner. This would obscure the glory of Jesus, and rob the Christian of that joy with which he ascribes praise to him, as "Lord of all."

In this way doth God fulfil that gracious promise to his people, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people;" effectually teaching them that they shall know the moral beauty of his word, by its transforming and quickening influence. Thus do they learn the truth of that declaration from the lips of Jesus, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

From these facts it may be clearly seen, that vital religion has a practical influence on its friends; and that God has not given his law in vain. For notwithstanding thousands of his rebellious subjects have pronounced it inefficient to the purposes for which it was promulgated, yet will he

conform all his chosen people to its spirituality; whilst those who die despising the gospel, will find that the righteous curse of the law and their own evil dispositions will forever separate them from God in despair and guilt. O ye, who are neglecting God and religion, be concerned to examine his word, and to become acquainted with those important subjects which it contains, lest you mourn at last, and say, How have we hated instruction, and despised reproof!

BEREA.

LOVE.

[Extracted from the Circular and Corresponding Letter contained in the Minutes of the Vermont Baptist Association, holden at Cornwall, October 5 and 6, 1808.]

Beloved brethren,

IN our present address, it will not be so much our object to enlighten your understanding into any mysterious part of divinity, as to affect your hearts and ours with a sense of that noble grace, the exercise of which we are so prone to lose, namely, LOVE. This is the basis of all true religion. This will keep the realm, when *faith* and *hope* shall cease. Should any think it too common a subject, and that it has been exhausted; we answer, that it is an old, and a new commandment, and yet retains its importance and pleasure, and cannot be exhausted to all eternity.

True brotherly love is founded on knowledge.—It is the object alone that can render our love truly acceptable to God, or beneficial to our brethren. An ignorant affection has proved a most pernicious thing. This undoubtedly is the cause why so many form a fellowship, when at the same time they dispense with the laws of Christ, and the necessary qualifications of the Christian. That fellowship which is thus formed over the head of truth, must flow from an ignorant affection, and be great hypocrisy. This unquestionably has influenced many, visibly to espouse the cause of truth; but having no ballast, they were driven with the wind, tossed, and at last shipwrecked. Therefore it is of the highest importance that we have our minds well informed respecting the great plan of grace, and of the articles

of faith and practice; that we may understandingly view and practise alike. This will beget within us sentiments of esteem and complacency towards each other, which will be lasting as eternity.

The grace of love is tempered with humility. It assumes not a spirit of superiority, but of lowliness of mind; esteeming others better than themselves. It sacrifices a fondness for vain glorious titles, and human applause. Hence says our Lord, "Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Matt. xxiii. 8—11. This grace puts on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which forgives injuries, bears reproaches, kindly receives reproof and instruction, and recompenses good for evil. If a Christian has any sense of the lost state from which he was saved, and considers how much God has done for him, and what little returns he has made for favours received, he will feel himself the most unworthy of all. Then he is best prepared for communion with God, and his people.—When called to the painful task of administering reproof to others, we ought to be impressed with the deepest sense of our own unworthiness. We are then most likely to meet with success. Says the apostle, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. vi. 1.

True brotherly love will lead us to love the saints in proportion as we see the divine image instamped upon them. There are some things, even among the people of God, which wear some appearances of brotherly love, and yet they fall essentially short of it. A warm affection may be exercised to some, because they are our kindred, or because of their natural sweetness of temper; and to others, on account of their politeness, or generosity; and to others, because of their riches, and popularity. And it may arise from their being great partizans with us. It is evident that all love and friendship founded on such ground, may fall short of the grace under consideration. It is the image of God which ought to attract our affection, let us discover it

where we may; and our love to them ought to be in proportion to the degrees of the image of God discovered in them.

This grace is the "bond of perfectness." It unites the church of Jesus into one harmonious body, cementing them all into an oneness of heart, in faith and practice; and influencing them unitedly to devote their time, talents and property, to the mutual benefit of each other, and to the glory of God. It will preserve from discord, envy and vexation (which are too prevalent among brethren) and make their communion sweetly harmonious. Behold how good and how pleasant it is, to see the church of Christ progressing in the bond of perfectness, until they "come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Love will make us tender of the character of our brethren, prevent our backbiting them, and save from incalculable mischief in the church of God. For want of this love, chief friends are separated, and the spirit of mutual love, forbearance, peace, and all the other graces, which so eminently adorn the Christian character, are laid aside and forgotten. Professors of religion would do well to consider, that if they backbite, or take up a reproach against their brother, they are not wholesome citizens of Zion, and that God will reprove them. Psal. xv. 3. l. 20. The church of God is warned against backbiters, and whisperers; and each one is exhorted to preserve himself from these sins.—We are told that the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell; and that our religion is vain if we do not bridle it. Dear brethren, the Lord preserve us from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue, that we may escape the "sharp arrows of the Almighty, with coals of juniper." Psal. cxx. 3, 4.

It will make us liberal and zealous for the promotion of the cause of Christ, and influence us to liberal contributions, to aid the promulgation of the gospel among the indigent and destitute (if possible) even to the ends of the earth; that incense may be offered to God in every place, from the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same.

Again, when we see our brethren reduced to want, this generous love will melt at the sight of their misery, and we shall hasten to their assistance. But if we have this world's goods, and see our brother in need, and shut up our bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in us? Under the influence of this grace, the people of God think it more blessed to give than to receive; and they will lay by in store, as God hath prospered them, for the support of the gospel, and of the poor saints; which is "an odour of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, and well-pleasing to God."

This grace will prompt us to a constant attendance on the worship of God, and church meeting. When we can excuse ourselves from attending public worship, because of a little bad weather, or on account of a slight indisposition, occasioned by excess of labour, when at the same time, we would appear abroad, if thereby we could gain a few dollars; we then manifest that at best this grace is at low ebb in our hearts, and that we love the world more than the cause of God or our brethren. But if brotherly love be in exercise, we shall (as far as may be) press through all difficulties, assemble with them, and take sweet counsel together. Yea, we would rather be door-keepers in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Again, brotherly love will dispose us to do all we can to maintain a regular gospel discipline in the church. We shall either accept or give reproof, as occasion may require. We shall stand by each other in the painful seasons of discipline, and manifest that we are born for the adversity of each other; and that we are companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus; and shall feel the force of that law of kindness, that does not suffer sin to rest upon a brother: and yet exercise a soothing pity towards the afflicted. On the contrary, it is a sign of bad times, when the ways of Zion mourn the want of travellers. Dear brethren, let us lament our sloth and negligence in this respect; and may the Giver of good inflame our minds with heavenly love, which will lead us to the greatest activity and diligence in future.

Finally, may we all seriously examine ourselves, and see if we do not hear our Lord speaking to us, as he did to the church of Ephesus, "I have somewhat against thee, because

thou hast left thy first love :—Remember from whence thou art fallen." Are we declining like that church, or like the Laodiceans? If so, then consider the solemn consequences; "Who then may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap;" and he will purify like gold and silver, that his children may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Let us love one another with a pure heart fervently; not in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth. May the love of Christ constrain us: as he has loved us, so may we love one another; and by this shall all men know that we are his disciples.

FOR THE WITNESS.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.....No. III.

5. BELIEVING Jesus Christ to be God, or only a creature, changes the ground of a sinner's hope for everlasting life. "Behold I lay in Zion," saith God, "for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." And it is also written, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Isaiah xxviii. 16. 1 Cor. iii. 11. Every other foundation of hope in the prospect of eternity but Jesus Christ, is a false foundation. They who trust in any other, shall be ashamed and confounded, when God shall lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet. But, they who believe in him, shall never be ashamed nor confounded, world without end. It is surely then of the greatest importance, to ascertain the true character of Jesus Christ, as revealed in the oracles of God. To have our hopes built on God or a creature, is either to be built on a rock or on the sand. It is of little consequence how fair the building is, if the foundation be bad. Regardless of this, the folly of the man will be at last made manifest, when his Babel building is found in ruins. If Jesus Christ is merely a creature, and we trust to him as such, it is evident that we have only a creature for the foundation of our hope before God. It is not easily perceived, how this with any propriety can be called a sure foundation. But, believing that

he is the Mighty God, we at once perceive the stability of the foundation which God hath laid in Zion, and the propriety of this declaration, "Upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 18.

That Jesus the Christ was equal with God, was the principal point of contention between him and the Jews. It was the good confession which he witnessed before Pontius Pilate, and for which he was condemned to be crucified. See John v. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 13. John xviii. 37. Matt. xxvi. 65, 66. To this truth he bore witness, in proof of it wrought miracles, and dying without recantation appealed to his rising from the dead in confirmation of it. This is frequently and emphatically called in scripture, "*the truth.*" This is the truth, which faith in Jesus Christ chiefly respects. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." For "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" John xx. 31. 1 John v. 1—5. The obedience of him who was God with us, is that by which the many are made righteous; and is in scripture styled, "the righteousness of God." This divine righteousness, known and believed, puts an end to the fruitless conjectures of men about the question, "how shall man be just with God." When this righteousness is received, the pride of the heart is humbled, every fancied difference betwixt us and others disappears, and with nothing but the cross in view, the soul overwhelmed with grief and gratitude, gladly exclaims, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Gal. vi. 14. In the death of Christ, who is God with us, a foundation of hope is laid in Zion for the chief of sinners; and permanent as the throne of God. But if Jesus Christ is but a creature, we may say, "How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed!" If a sinner is at ease in his sins, the very thing which of all others is calculated to smite his conscience and alarm his fears is removed. If pinched in his conscience with the distressing question, "What must I do to be saved?" every thing which can satisfactorily remove his distresses, and give him peace with God, is taken away.

Those who believe that Jesus Christ is merely a created Saviour, must admit that this creature is the foundation of their hope; by his righteousness they are justified, and in his cross they glory. If he be so, all is safe; for being justified by his blood, they shall assuredly be saved from wrath through him. If he be not, it must also be allowed, that their faith is vain, their hope a delusion, and that their end must be destruction.

6. As Jesus Christ is believed to be God or a creature, the saints on earth and in heaven, give praise to God or a creature. The church on earth says, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever." Rev. i. 5, 6. The church above sing a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Rev. v. 9, 10. With them the angelic hosts unite in "singing with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Rev. v. 12. With them the whole creation join in saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever." Rev. v. 13, 14. From these, and many other passages of the sacred oracles, it is evident that the songs of saints and angels are employed and shall be employed forever, in the praises of Jesus Christ. No difference is put between the praise given to the Son and the Father, but that all should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. Nor is the praise given to Jesus Christ an occasional ascription, but he is the burden of that song, which shall be sung forever and ever. Is it possible that God has transferred the praise due only to himself, to a creature, or does he permit this creature to share it equally with him? Shall the saints and angels be employed forever and ever, in singing the praises of a creature? This cannot be denied if Jesus Christ be but a creature, for whoever

he is, the ransomed church of God will forever sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory," &c.

These are a few of the many things which might be brought to view, to shew the importance of believing, that Jesus Christ is Immanuel, God with us. Indeed, time would fail to say how important this is, both to our present comfort and future hope. It is neither want of charity, nor prejudice of party, to assert, that the man who wants faith in this truth, whatever his faith or practice may be, is not a Christian. The Christ he has conceived to himself, is not the Christ of God, the Saviour of the world; but the idol of his own imagination. If he should be a master in Israel, and call Jesus a teacher come from God, or compliment him with the dignity of a super-angelic creature, the Saviour still addresses him as he did Nicodemus of old, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." John iii. 3—7.

(To be continued.)

*EXTRACT FROM BACKUS.**

LATE reasonings have set the creature man so high, as to deny that a cause without him can determine his choice; while they hold that God's choice must be determined by what he sees in the creature, and not in himself. But the only seed that can produce the new birth gives such a turn to the mind, as to view all flesh but as fading grass, and the inhabitants of the world but as grasshoppers before God; yea, as a drop of the bucket, and small dust of the balance. And to set the contrast in its full light, it is declared, that "all nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity." This is the "incorruptible seed," of which souls are "born again." Isa. xl. 6—17. 1 Pet. i. 23, 24.

In our natural darkness we imagine that our obligation to serve God and to come to Christ depends upon our will

* Vide History of the Baptists, Vol. II. p. 369.

and pleasure; and that when we get ready to set about the work in earnest, his goodness and mercy will necessarily bring him to appear for our help, and to pardon and save us. Whereas in truth it is as much impossible for any rational person ever to be exempt, for one moment, from obligation to love God with all his powers, and to love his neighbour as himself, as it is for him to escape out of God's presence, or to put an end to his own existence. When Christ came and laid down his life for us, he gave the fullest demonstration of the truth and love of God (as it was previously revealed in predictions and figures) and greatly enhanced our obligation to love and obey him; and also clearly opened the way for our doing it, in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. The oldness of the letter lays every sin and defect as a bar in the way of approach to a holy God; but the newness of the spirit, while it cuts us off from any confidence in the flesh, makes all our sins and wants powerful arguments for our daily coming to the throne of grace for supplies. Though Adam in innocency could have no idea of a mediator, or of pardon and cleansing from sin; yet his obligation to the God of truth made it his indispensable duty to believe and obey him, in all his revealed will, and highly criminal to call the same in question. And unbelief still remains unspeakably criminal in his posterity; for their natural powers of thinking and choice are not lost. Therefore the more unable we are to love God with all our powers, and to believe and obey his revealed will, the more guilty and inexcusable; because we love the creature instead of the Creator, and regard lying vanities in opposition to eternal truth, which is confirmed by every event that ever happened.

Good men and bad, angels and devils, all act according to the characters given of them in the holy scriptures. No soil can bear good wheat until the roots naturally in it are broken up, and the wheat sown therein; so the new birth cannot be wrought in any but by divine revelation. It is not a creation of new faculties, but the giving new ideas and dispositions, which were our indispensable duty before, but our evil hearts were contrary thereto. Breaking up of the thorns and briers in a field, is removing things which ought not to be there; and the good seed being sown, and an union being formed between the seed and the soil, the birth, the growth is produced.

FOR THE WITNESS.

ON SYMBOLICAL LANGUAGE.....No. III.

Symbols were frequently derived from the visible heavens. The Egyptians, Chaldeans, and others supposed there was a union between the invisible, natural, and political worlds. They conceived the visible heavens, and the things they beheld in them, to be representatives of the Supreme Being, and his ministers. In process of time, some of them began to think, that the things they beheld were the Deity and his angels, and began to worship them. Supposing the sun, moon, stars, &c. to be invisible powers, or their representatives, they also supposed that the political and moral worlds, were so united to the celestial, by such concatenations from the highest to the lowest, that when any of the powers in the heavens were affected, it portended and signified like affection or alteration in the political and moral worlds. This supposed union between the heavens and the earth, probably was the foundation of their judicial astrology.

Their gods came under the notion of powers in the invisible world, the heavenly bodies in the celestial world; and their monarchs, princes, &c. came under the same notion of powers in the lower world, whom they considered as vicegerents of the gods. This led to represent the powers in the political, or lower world, by the symbols or representatives of their gods in the heavenly world. Thus, the sun being the chief of the celestial world, it was used by them as the symbol of a king, the chief governor of a nation, and also for a father, the chief governor of a family, &c. The moon and stars, to the inferiors in power and dignity. In reference, Gen. xxxvii. 9. Joseph said, "I have dreamed a dream; and behold, the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars, made obeisance to me." His father, when he heard these words, understanding them in their symbolical sense, reproved Joseph, and thus explains them, "Shall I, and thy mother, and brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth." Whether Joseph in his dream saw his father, mother, and brethren bow down themselves unto him, and from modesty chose to express himself in symbolical language, or, as he says, saw these heavenly bodies doing obeisance to him, and was so interpreted by his father, makes no difference as to the meaning

and application of the symbols. But as these shall be afterwards explained, when we consider particular symbols, it is unnecessary to add more at present.

Symbols were often taken from the implements used in battle. A sword, spear, bow, &c. are the symbols of war. To prepare these, is to prepare for war. To destroy these indicates peace. Thus it is said when peace is promised, "I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth." Hos. ii. 18. "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace to the heathen, &c. Zech. ix. 10. And he (Christ) shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isa. ii. 4.

To convert the implements of husbandry into instruments of war, denotes that war is near. "Order ye the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle. Harness the horses, and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with your helmets; furbish the spears, and put on the brigandines." Jer. xlvi. 3, 4. "Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears," &c. Joel iii. 10.

Symbols were often derived from the ensigns of government. A rod or sceptre, which is one of the ensigns of government, is used to denote administration, rule, power, and authority, &c. Thus, Jacob says in his prophecy concerning the Messiah, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come," &c. Gen. xlix. 10. Also, Balaam says in his prophecy, "A sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab," &c. Numb. xxiv. 17.

Also, speaking of Egypt, the prophet says, "The sceptre of Egypt shall depart away." Zech. x. 11. In these texts the word sceptre is used as the symbol for power and administration, &c. The destruction of the power and government of a people, is expressed symbolically by the breaking of their sceptre. Thus, speaking of Moab, the prophet says, "All ye that are about him, bemoan him; all ye that know his name, say, How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod!" Jer. xlviii. 17.

(To be continued.)

FOR THE WITNESS.

TO QUARTUS.

THE citation of scripture on trivial occasions, my brother, I lament with you, as an evil and a bitter thing, that seems to have pervaded every rank in society; and indeed so appositely may common occurrences as well as affairs of the greatest magnitude be supplied with illustrative passages from holy writ, that it is more to be regretted than wondered at, that ever the Christian should in unwatchful moments cast wantonly around him his pearls, which the infidel (not unfrequently ignorant whence they came) may gather to amuse himself in his cheerless condition, or be solicitous to employ to ennoble his writings or conversation, as riches not found in any mine he is acquainted with.

Pungent is the thought, that any who have been elevated as from the lowest pit to sit down in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, should thus trifle with the truth that has made them free; it is a circumstance amongst the many daily crowding on one's mind indicative of a defect, which, if supplied, would secure concomitant felicities to the church as well as extensive benefit to mankind in general. Surely the terrible quotation which concludes your letter that God first visits his own house in judgment, if duly considered, would impel to the duty of CHRISTIAN EXHORTATION.

Love to God and to the brethren are motives which ought constantly to actuate us to every good work; that the fact is not so, however, is evinced by the necessity there is to enforce the duty of exhortation. But ah! did Christians comprehend the benefits flowing from the exercise of this duty, it were impossible to seduce them from the fulfilment of it. Consolations for mourners in Zion, monitions for the straying, ammunition for Christian warfare, sympathies for the afflicted, and congratulations for those who rejoice, are blessings that should be appreciated at no mean rate. And what are the marks of failure in this duty? Darkness of mind, unfruitfulness, disobedience, aversion to other duties. How many unwary youths have been misled by such as with craftiness lie in wait to deceive, whom a timely hint dropped in this way might have rescued! How many churches have been destitute of elders to break the bread of life to them for a considerable while, who have

been shamefully inattentive to the injunctions on this subject so reiterated in the epistles of the New Testament! And how many again have been racked with dissensions, from not earlier understanding each other's views of things! Indeed it were absurd to suppose that members of a church should be guilty of so eminent a breach of ecclesiastical order, and yet keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. How should the *same thing* be spoken by brethren without the church, when they do not hear each other speak within? Can this unity be kept by silence? or is there no occasion for reproof or admonition, is there no necessity in modern churches for exhorting with long-suffering and *doctrine?* To set to our seal that God is true, is not to be done by sealing our lips in dead silence; to keep the unity of the Spirit, to be ready to give every one a reason of the hope that is in us, to be able to withstand the gainsayers, and to make appear that we have one faith, one Lord, one baptism, it is absolutely necessary that we neglect not the gift that is in us, that we hide not the talent in the napkin.

"God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." "This is love, that we walk after his commandments." Is it without ground, then, that some in the world very fluent on the subject of politics, but when God's word, the theme of angels, and the redeemed, is introduced, perfect mutes, have their profession suspected of insincerity?

> "'Tis truth divine, exhibited on earth,
> "Gives Charity her being and her birth."

Nor ought it to excite our astonishment, that a man who is not naturally reserved, yet is not accustomed to season his conversation with salt, should feel it an irksome task, even within the very precincts of the church, to admonish his brethren. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. Who can treasure up in his mind the maxims, and be so overwhelmed in the concerns of the world, as to make the kingdom of God and his righteousness but secondary, and at the same time be free from the apprehension, that should he attempt to exhort, he would possibly drop the *h* from Shibboleth? Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Young Timothy would not neglect in the church the gift that is in him on account of his ignorance of divine truth, for from a child he has known the holy scriptures; but because he is sensible that the aged and experienced brethren are so much more capable of speaking to the purpose, because he is aware that some man may despise his youth, and thus prevent the intended effect of his admonitions, he is deterred from orally comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and in some measure, from warring the good warfare. On reflection, however, he finds his views of a subject so different and apparently more consistent with the word and the testimony, that he regrets he did not state them, as, at least, he should have had the advantage of being set right, if incorrect. He resolves that the next time the topic is introduced he will venture to advance his sentiments. The opportunity arrives, but the palpitations of his bosom are too much for him; besides, Diotrephes, who loves to have the pre-eminence, has sagely remarked, that modesty sits well on youth. True, observes brother Eubulus; but pride is sometimes thought to be diffidence. Pudens is as uneasy on hearing this observation as that which preceded it, and heartily wishes the subject changed, though he dare not express his opinion, lest he should make a blunder in his syntax, which might not escape the notice of Tyrannus, the schoolmaster. Eubulus proceeds—Modesty as well as other Christian graces if carried beyond a certain point changes its character: it were a great loss to the church of Christ, if all her young men should act on the principle that silence is modesty: and even apostolic exhortation to the duty of cultivating gifts according to such a position would have no meaning. When a man becomes a member of a church, he does violence to the profession he has made if he fulfil not incumbent duties.—Scarce had the speaker paused to breathe, when Hymeneus, whose words do eat as a canker, exclaims, Incumbent duties! Let us not talk about points of doctrine and duties of discipline; let us love one another—For the truth's sake: rejoined Philemon the ruling elder; but brother Eubulus, you had a word of exhortation; say on. Christians, continues Eubulus, ought to exhort one another daily, lest they be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin: one ought not to suffer sin upon a brother, but faithfully reprove him. It seems frustrating the grace of God to refuse to tell a brother

of his fault through fear that he may hereafter have to reciprocate the charge. Reproof at all times, if administered with meekness and proper forbearance, can do no harm; but if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. The physician of the body does not interrogate the patient how he will like the taste of his medicine, nor does the parent or tutor consult an offending boy about the number of stripes due to his fault: however painful to each party, what is necessary must be performed. Exhortation suited to time and place, is a duty and a privilege that brings with it incalculable benefits; and however willing to admit an apology for its absence, when it is in truth *necessarily* absent, it seems to be a question well worthy the attention of Christians, what are the obstacles which prevent its becoming more general. I beseech you, brother, by the mercies of God, that you present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

PHILOLOGUS.

FOR THE WITNESS.

THOUGHTS ON PRAYER.

IT is believed that no ordinance of the gospel is less understood than prayer. Yet where is the man or even child, who is not in his own opinion capable and even disposed to this spiritual exercise? Alas, that any should be led into such a fatal mistake by false education, or customs unauthorized by the word of God. But what has surprised me most is, that some who have undoubtedly known the great secret of drawing near to God, have been deceived into the dangerous experiment of inviting and urging the unregenerate to prayer as the appointed means of obtaining the favour of Heaven. Where is the Bible warrant for this? The answer is, "But I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do this for them." Shocking perversion! Are unconverted sinners *the house of Israel?* Let the passage quoted be compared with the context, and it proves the reverse of what is contended. But, unwilling to be driven

from a favourite and popular opinion, those who contend for indiscriminate prayer, fly to Paul to help them out of the difficulty. He says, "I will that men pray every where." But let him finish his own sentence, and the difficulty increases upon them. The prayer he directs to is a *holy* exercise, unmixed with wrath or even doubting. Let the scriptures be fairly quoted and rightly understood, and no one will dare to contend for the propriety of a heartless formal service as a requirement of that Being who seeketh such to worship him as do it in spirit and in truth. "Except a man have the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Jesus and his apostles no where give directions how to pray in unbelief: on the contrary, every thing necessary is said and implied to establish the fact, that the unrenewed man is totally disinclined and therefore absolutely incapable of offering up acceptable sacrifice. It is true, every intelligent creature is under obligation to serve God; and it is equally true, that none do or can serve him acceptably without holiness of heart. Joshua commands the whole congregation of Israel to fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in *truth*; and urges them to choose whom they will serve; which clearly evinces their obligation. But he corrects their mistake when they very readily answered, "We will serve the Lord," by faithfully declaring to them that they cannot serve the Lord: for he is an holy God.

There is one passage of scripture, which, though not apparently designed to establish this particular fact, yet it seems to me to put it beyond all doubt. "And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." All agree that there can be no prayer without calling on the name of the Lord. Hence it is proved to a demonstration, that the prayer enjoined in the Bible is a holy exercise, a fruit of that faith in the Mediator, without which no soul does or can draw near to God.

These few introductory thoughts are suggested with a view to excite attention to this important subject. Should abler pens engage in it, I shall read with more pleasure than I can write. Persuaded, however, that the subject has been grossly abused and not exhausted, it is my design to attempt some further observations hereafter. NEHEMIAH.

NATURAL AND MORAL INABILITY.

INABILITY is the want of power sufficient for the performance of any particular action or design. It has been divided into *natural* and *moral*. We are said to be naturally unable to do a thing when we cannot do it if we wish, because of some impending defect or obstacle that is extrinsic to the will, either in the understanding, constitution of body, or external objects. *Moral* inability consists not in any of these things, but either in the want of inclination, or the strength of a contrary inclination; or the want of sufficient motives in view to induce and excite the act of the will, or the strength of apparent motives to the contrary. For the sake of illustration, we will here present the reader with a few examples of both.

Natural.	*Moral.*
Cain *could not* have killed Abel, if Cain had been the weakest, and Abel aware of him.	Cain *could not* have killed Abel, if Cain had feared God, and loved his brother.
Jacob *could not* rejoice in Joseph's exaltation before he heard of it.	Potiphar's wife *could not* rejoice in it, if she continued under it.
The woman mentioned in 2d Kings, vi. 29. *could not* kill her neighbour's son and eat him, when he was hid and she could not find him.	Had that woman been a very affectionate mother, she *could not* have killed her own son in a time of plenty, as she did in a time of famine.
Hazael *could not* have smothered Benhadad, if he had not been suffered to enter his chamber.	If a dutiful, affectionate son had been waiting on Benhadad in Hazael's stead, he *could not* have smothered him as Hazael did.

These are a few instances from which we may clearly learn the distinction of natural and moral inability. It must not, however, be forgotten, that moral inability or disinclination is no excuse for our omission of duty, though want of natural faculties or necessary means would. That God may command, though man hath not a present moral ability to perform, is evident, if we consider, 1. That man once had a power to do whatsoever God would command him; he

had a power to cleave to God.—2. That God did not deprive man of his ability.—3. Therefore God's right of commanding, and man's obligation of returning and cleaving to God, remains firm.

REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN BOSTON IN 1740.

Messrs. Editors,

In lately examining a work, printed in 1754, entitled, "Historical Collections relating to remarkable periods of the success of the gospel, and eminent instruments employed in promoting it," I found the following interesting account of the great revival of religion in Boston in 1740. The above work, compiled by Mr. John Gillies, late one of the ministers at Glasgow, consists of extracts from well-attested documents; and that now communicated was written by Mr. Thomas Prince, some time minister at the Old South Church, Boston. The account exhibits the features of true religion, and demonstrates the absurdity of condemning those appearances, which, in all revivals, the modern scribes and pharisees, as well as deists and formalists in every age, condemn as the mere effects of a heated imagination. I hope you will consider it deserving a place in the Witness, and that its publication will do good.

Yours, URBANE.

From the year 1738, we had received accounts of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, as a very pious young minister of the church of England, rising up in the spirit of the reformers, and preaching their doctrines first in England, and then in America, with surprising power and success; which raised desires in great numbers among us to see and hear him. And having received invitations to come hither, he from Georgia and South-Carolina arrived at Rhode-Island on the Lord's-day, September 14, 1740, and the Thursday evening after came to Boston. Next day Dr. Sewall and I made him a visit, found several ministers and other gentlemen of the town with him, and that Dr. Coleman and Mr. Cooper had engaged him to preach this afternoon in their house of public worship; and in about an hour we went to the place, which was quickly crowded with two or three

thousand people. He began with a short and fervent prayer; and after singing, took his text from John xvii. 2. gave us a plain, weighty, regular discourse: representing that all our learning and morality will never save us; and without an experimental knowledge of God in Christ we must perish in hell forever. He spake as became the oracles of God, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; and especially when he came to his application, he addressed himself to the audience in such a tender, earnest, and moving manner, exciting us to come and be acquainted with the dear Redeemer, as melted the assembly into tears.

Next morning, at Dr. Sewall's and my desire, he preached at the South Church to further acceptance. He spake with a mighty sense of God, eternity, the immortality and preciousness of the souls of his hearers, of their original corruption, and of the extreme danger the unregenerate are in; with the nature and absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Ghost; and of believing in Christ, in order to our pardon, justification, yielding an acceptable obedience, and obtaining salvation from hell and an entrance into heaven. His doctrine was plainly that of the reformers: declaring against putting our good works or morality in the room of Christ's righteousness, or their having any hand in our justification, or being indeed pleasing to God while we are totally unsanctified, acting from corrupt principles, and unreconciled enemies to him; which occasioned some to mistake him, as if he opposed morality. But he insisted on it, that the tree of the heart is by original sin exceedingly corrupted, and must be made good by regeneration, that so the fruits proceeding from it may be good likewise; that where the heart is renewed, it ought, and will be, careful to maintain good works; that if any be not habitually so careful, who think themselves renewed, they deceive their own souls; and even the most improved in holiness, as well as others, must entirely depend on the righteousness of Christ for the acceptance of their persons and services. And though now and then he dropped some expressions that were not so accurate and guarded as we should expect from aged and long-studied ministers, yet I had the satisfaction to observe his readiness with great modesty and thankfulness to receive correction as soon as offered. In short, he was a most importunate wooer of souls to come

to Christ for the enjoyment of him and all his benefits. He distinctly applied his exhortations to the elderly people, the middle-aged, the young, the Indians, and negroes; and had a most winning way of addressing them. He affectionately prayed for our magistrates, ministers, colleges, candidates for the ministry, and churches as well as people in general: and before he left us, he in a public and moving manner observed to the people how sorry he was to hear that the religious assemblies, especially on lectures, had been so thin; exhorted them earnestly to a more general attendance on our public ministrations for the time to come, and told them how glad he should be to hear of the same.

Multitudes were greatly affected, and many awakened with his lively ministry. Though he preached every day, the houses were exceedingly crowded; but when he preached in the common, a vaster number attended: and almost every evening the house where he lodged was thronged, to hear his prayers and counsels. Upon invitation he also preached in several neighbouring towns, travelled and preached as far as York, above seventy miles north-east of Boston, returned hither, gave us his farewell affectionate sermon Lord's day evening, October 14th; next morning left us, travelled westward to Northampton, thence through Connecticut, New-York, and New-Jersey, to Philadelphia, and thence sailed to South-Carolina.

Upon his leaving us, great numbers in this town were so happily concerned about their souls, as we had never seen any thing like it before, except at the time of the general earthquake,* and their desires excited to hear their ministers more than ever; so that our assemblies, both on lectures and sabbaths, were surprisingly increased. And now the people wanted to hear us oftener; in consideration of which, a public lecture was proposed to be set up at Dr. Coleman's church, [Brattle-street] near the midst of the town, on every Tuesday evening.

* Though people were then generally frighted, and many awakened to such a sense of their duty as to offer themselves to our communion, yet very few came to me then under deep convictions of their unconverted and lost condition in comparison of what came now. Nor did those who came to me then, come so much with the inquiry, What shall we do to be saved? as to signify they had such a sense of their duty to come to the Lord's table, that they dare not stay away any longer.

Lord's day afternoon, October 19th, public notice was there given of the proposed lecture to be on the Tuesday evening following; which the religious people in general received with so much joy, that when the evening came, the house seemed to be crowded as much as if Mr. Whitefield was there. It was the first stated evening lecture in these parts of the world; and Dr. Coleman began it with a most suitable and moving sermon upon Isa. lx. 8. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" The Tuesday evening after, the Rev. Dr. Sewall preached the lecture in the same place; and the house was then also greatly crowded with attentive hearers: and so it continued to be on these lectures for many months after.

Upon the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent's coming and preaching here, the people appeared to be yet much more awakened about their souls than before. He came, I think, on Saturday, December 13th, this year; preached at the New-North on both the parts of the following day, as also on Monday in the afternoon, when I first heard him; and there was a great assembly. He did not indeed at first come up to my expectation, but afterwards exceeded it. In private converse with him, I found him to be a man of considerable parts and learning; free, gentle, condescending; and from his own various experience, reading the most noted writers on experimental divinity, as well as the scriptures, and conversing with many who had been awakened by his ministry in New-Jersey, where he then lived, he seemed to have as deep an acquaintance with the experimental part of religion as any I have conversed with; and his preaching was as searching and rousing as ever I heard.

He seemed to have no regard to please the eyes of his hearers with agreeable gestures, nor their ears with delivery, nor their fancy with language; but to aim directly at their hearts and consciences, to lay open their ruinous delusions, shew them their numerous, secret, hypocritical shifts in religion, and drive them out of every deceitful refuge wherein they made themselves easy with the form of godliness without the power. And many who were pleased in a good conceit of themselves before, now found, to their great distress, they were only self-deceived hypocrites. And though, while the discovery was making, some at first raged, as they have owned to me and others; yet in the progress of the

discovery, many were forced to submit: and then the power of God so broke and humbled them, that they wanted a further and even a thorough discovery; they went to hear him, that the secret corruptions and delusions of their hearts might be more discovered; and the more searching the sermon, the more acceptable it was to their anxious minds.

From the terrible and deep convictions he had passed through in his own soul, he seemed to have such a lively view of the Divine Majesty, the spirituality, purity, extensiveness, and strictness of his law; with his glorious holiness and displeasure at sin, his justice, truth and power in punishing the damned, that the very terrors of God seemed to rise in his mind afresh, when he displayed and brandished them in the eyes of unreconciled sinners. And though some could not bear the representation, and avoided his preaching; yet the arrows of conviction, by his ministry, seemed so deeply to pierce the hearts of others, and even some of the most stubborn sinners, as to make them fall down at the feet of Christ, and yield a lowly submission to him.

And here I cannot but observe, that those who call these convictions by the name of religious frights or fears, and then ascribe them to the mere natural or mechanical influence of terrible words, sounds and gestures, moving tones, or boisterous ways of speaking, appear to me to be not sufficiently acquainted with the subjects of this work, as carried on in the town in general, or with the nature of their convictions; or at least as carried on among the people I have conversed with. For I have had awakened people of every assembly of the Congregational and Presbyterian way in town, in considerable numbers, repairing to me from time to time; and from their various and repeated narratives shall show the difference. I do not remember any crying out, or falling down, or fainting, either under Mr. Whitefield's or Mr. Tennent's ministry, all the while they were here; though many, both women and men, both those who had been vicious and those who had been moral, yea, some religious and learned, as well as unlearned, were in great concern of soul. But, as Dr. Coleman well expressed it in his letter of November 23, 1741; "We have seen little of those extremes or supposed blemishes of this work in Boston, but much of the blessed fruits of it have fallen to our share.

God has spoken to us in a more soft and calm wind; and we have neither had those outcries and faintings in our assemblies, which have disturbed the worship in many places, nor yet those manifestations of joy inexpressible, which now fill some of our eastern parts."*

(To be continued.)

EXTRACT FROM FOSTER'S ESSAYS.

THE various interesting sets of short essays, especially the Spectator and Rambler, must have had, during a season at least, a very considerable influence on the moral taste of the public; and probably they have a considerable influence still. The very ample scope of the Spectator gave a fair opportunity for a serious writer to introduce, excepting science, a little of every subject connected with the condition and happiness of men. How did it happen that the stupendous circumstance of the redemption by the Messiah, of which the importance is commensurate with the whole interests of man, with the value of his immortal spirit, with the government of his Creator in this world, and with the happiness of eternity, should not have been a few times in the long course of that work very fully and solemnly exhibited? Why should not a few of the most peculiar of the doctrines comprehended in the subject, have been clothed with the fascinating elegance of Addison, from whose pen many persons would have received an occasional evangelical lesson with incomparably more candour than from any professed divine? A pious and benevolent man, such as the avowed advocate of Christianity ought to be, should not have been contented that so many thousands of minds as his writings were adapted to instruct and to charm, should have been left, for any thing that he very explicitly attempted to the contrary in his most popular works, to end a life which he had contributed to refine, acquainted but slightly with the grand security of happiness after death. Or if it was not his duty to introduce in a formal manner any of the most specifically evan-

* His Letter at the end of Mr. Edwards' Sermon on the distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God, printed at London in 1742.

gelical subjects, it might at least have been expected, that some of the many serious essays contained in the Spectator should have had more of a Christian tinge, more references to the sentiments of the gospel, intermingled with the speculations concerning the Deity, and the gravest moral subjects. There might easily have been more assimilation of what may, as it now stands, be called a *literary* religion, to the spirit of the New Testament. From him also, as a kind of dictator among the majority of the elegant writers of the age, it might have been expected that he would have set himself, with the same decisive and noble indignation which his Cato had shewn against the betrayers of Roman liberty and laws, to denounce that ridicule which has wounded religion by a careless or by a crafty manner of holding up its abuses to scorn: but of this the Spectator itself is not free from examples.

Addison wrote a book expressly in defence of the religion of Christ; but to be the dignified advocate of a cause, and to be its humble disciple, may be very different things. An advocate has a feeling of making himself important, he seems to *confer* something on the cause; but as a disciple he must feel littleness, humility and submission. Self admiration might find much more to gratify it in becoming the *patron* of a beggar, than the *servant* of the greatest potentate. Addison was moreover very unfortunate, for any thing like justice to the gospel, in the class of persons with whom he associated, and whom he was anxious to please. One can imagine with what a perfect storm of ridicule he would have been greeted, on entering one of his celebrated coffee-houses of wits, on the day after he should have published in the Spectator, a paper, for instance, on the necessity of being devoted to the service of Jesus Christ. The friendship of the world ought to be "a pearl of great price," for its cost is very serious.

EXTRACT FROM FULLER'S BACKSLIDER.

THERE is another species of departure from God which it becomes me to notice, as many in the present age have fallen sacrifices to it. This is, *taking an eager and deep inter-*

est in political disputes.—The state of things in the world has of late been such as to attract the attention, and employ the conversation of all classes of people. As success has attended each of the contending parties, the minds of men, according to their views and attachments, have been affected; some with fear and dismay, lest their party interests should be ruined; others with the most sanguine hopes, as if the world were shortly to be emancipated, war abolished, and all degrees of men rendered happy. This is one of those strong winds of temptation that occasionally arise in the troubled ocean of this world, against which those who are bound to a better, had need to be on their guard. The flattering objects held out by revolutionists were so congenial with the wishes of humanity, and their pretences to disinterested philanthropy so fair, that many religious people, for a time, forgot their own principles. While gazing on the splendid spectacle, it did not occur to them, that *the wicked*, whatever name they assumed, *would do wickedly*. By observing the progress of things, however, they have been convinced that all hopes of the state of mankind being essentially ameliorated by any means short of the prevalence of the gospel, are visionary, and have accordingly turned their attention to better things. But some have gone greater lengths. Their whole heart has been engaged in this pursuit. It has been their meat and their drink: and this being the case, it is not surprising that they have become indifferent to religion; for these things cannot consist with each other. It is not only contrary to the whole tenor of the New Testament, but tends in its own nature to eat up true religion. If any worldly matter, however lawful in itself, engage our attention inordinately, it becomes a snare; and more so in matters that do not come within the line of our immediate duty. But if in attending to it we are obliged to neglect what manifestly *is* our duty, and to overleap the boundaries of God's holy word, let us look to it: beyond those boundaries is a pit, in which there is reason to fear, great numbers have been lost. There were many in the early ages of Christianity who *despised government*, and were not afraid to speak evil of dignities: but were they good men? Far from it. They were professors of Christianity, however: for they are said to have *escaped the pollutions of the world, through*

the knowledge of Christ; yea, and what is more, they had attained the character of Christian *teachers.* But of what description? "False teachers, who privily brought in damnable heresies, denying the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction;" whose *ways*, though *followed by many*, were *pernicious*, occasioning "the way of truth to be evil spoken of." 2 Pet. ii. To copy the examples of such men is no light matter.

When a man's thoughts and affections are filled with such things as these, the scriptures become a kind of *dead letter*, while the speeches and writings of politicians are the *lively oracles:* spiritual conversation is unheard, or if introduced by others, considered as a flat and uninteresting topic; and leisure hours, whether sitting in the house or walking by the way, instead of being employed in talking and meditating on divine subjects, are engrossed by things which do not profit. Such are the rocks amongst which many have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

Whatever may be the duty of a nation in extraordinary cases, there is scarcely any thing in all the New Testament inculcated with more solemnity than that individuals, and especially Christians, should be obedient, peaceable, and loyal subjects; nor is there any sin much more awfully censured than the contrary conduct. It requires not only that we keep within the compass of the laws, (which is easily done by men of the most unprincipled minds) but that we honour, and *intercede with God* for those who administer them. These duties were pressed particularly upon the Romans, who by their situation were more exposed than others to the temptation of joining in factions and conspiracies, which were almost continually at work in that tumultuous city.

Nor does the danger belong exclusively to one side. We may sin by an adherence to the measures of a government, as well as by an opposition to them. If we enlist under the banners of the party in power, *considered as a party*, we shall feel disposed to vindicate or palliate all their proceedings, which may be very inconsistent with Christianity. Paul, though he enjoined obedience to the existing government, yet was never an advocate for Roman ambition; and when addressing himself to a governor, did not fail to "reason on righteousness, and judgment to come." It is

our duty, no doubt, to consider that many things which seem evil to us might appear otherwise, if all the circumstances of the case were known, and therefore to forbear passing hasty censures: but on the other hand, we ought to be aware of applauding every thing that is done, lest, if it be evil, we be partakers of other men's sins, and contribute to their being repeated.

While some, burning with revolutionary zeal, have imagined they could discover all the wonderful events of the present day in scripture prophecy, and have been nearly blinded to the criminality of the principal agents; others, by a contrary prejudice, have disregarded the works of the Lord, and the operations of his hand. Whatever may be said of means and instruments, we must be strangely insensible not to see the hand of God in the late overturnings among the papal powers: and if we be induced by political attachment, instead of joining the inhabitants of heaven in a song of praise, to unite with the *merchants of the earth* in their lamentations, are we not carnal? There is no need of vindicating or palliating the measures of men which may be wicked in the extreme: but neither ought we to overlook the hand of God.

The great point with Christians should be, an attachment to government *as government*, irrespective of the party which administers it; for this is right, and would tend more than any thing to promote the kingdom of Christ. We are not called to yield up our consciences in religious matters; nor to approve of what is wrong in those which are civil: but we are not at liberty to deal in acrimony, or evil-speaking. The good which results to society from the very worst government upon earth is great, when compared with the evils of anarchy. On this principle, it is probable, the apostle enjoined obedience to *the powers that were*, even during the reign of Nero. Christians are soldiers under the King of Kings: their object should be to conquer all ranks and degrees of men to the obedience of faith. But to do this, it is necessary that they avoid all those embranglements and disputes which retard their main design. If a wise man wishes to gain over a nation to any great and worthy object, he does not enter into their little differences, nor embroil himself in their party contentions; but, bearing good will to all, seeks the general good: by these means he

is respected by all, and all are ready to hear what he has to offer. Such should be the wisdom of Christians. There is enmity enough for us to encounter, without unnecessarily adding to it.

If a Christian be under the necessity of siding with a party, undoubtedly he ought to act in favour of that which appears to him the best: but even in this case, it is not becoming him to enter with eagerness into their disputes. Let worldly men, who thirst after preferment, busy themselves in a contested election—they have their reward: but let Christians, if called to appear, discharge their duty, and retire from the tumultuous scene.

By entering deeply into the *party* contentions of the nation, religious people on both sides will be charged in their turn with disloyalty; and it may be not always without a cause.

Whatever be our private opinion of the men, we shall respect and honour the rulers. That loyalty which operates only with the prevalence of a party, whichever it be, is at a great remove from the loyalty enjoined by the scriptures.

By standing aloof from all parties *as such*, and approving themselves the friends of government and good order, by whomsoever administered, Christians would acquire a dignity of character worthy of their profession, would be respected by all, and possess greater opportunities of doing good: while by a contrary conduct they render one part of the community their enemies, and the other I fear derive but little spiritual advantage from being their friends.

ON THE MINISTRY.

Answer to the Query, "How may a man ascertain his election of God to the ministry of the gospel? And what are sufficient qualifications for that important office?"

I CONCEIVE an answer to the latter part of the question will enable a person to decide upon the former; it being a principle which may be taken for granted, that whoever possesses the essential qualifications for the Christian ministry, is called of God to exercise them. "Every man that hath received the gift," is commanded of God "to minister

the same, as a good steward of the manifold grace of God." Only let him take heed that "if he speak, it be according to the oracles of God." 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

Now the scriptures are not silent on the qualifications of a bishop. See 1 Tim. iii. 1—7. By a bishop I must be allowed to understand, not a lord in lawn, but a Christian pastor. And besides those requisites which belong to his moral and religious character, there are two things which appear to be absolutely necessary to the discharge of this sacred office; one is, that he have a true *desire after it*, and the other, *an ability for it*. The *first* of these qualifications is included in the terms, *if a man* DESIRE *the office of a bishop*. It is supposed that this desire shall spring from a pure motive, and not from the love of ease, affluence, or applause; but from a concern to glorify God, and promote the salvation of men. It is necessary, in my judgment, that there should be a *special desire* of this sort; a kind of fire kindled in the bosom, that it would be painful to extinguish. The *second* qualification is contained in those expressive terms, APT TO TEACH. He must possess not only an inventive mind, but a kind of natural readiness in communicating his ideas.

Neither of these qualifications is sufficient in itself. A man may have a desire after the Christian ministry, and that desire may arise from the purest motives; and yet, having no competent ability for the work, he is certainly not called of God to be employed in it. I doubt not but the Lord will take it well that it was in the heart of such persons to build him a house, though their desire may never be accomplished. Ahimaaz was eager to run, though he had no tidings ready; but his running answered no good purpose. On the other hand, a person may not only be a good man and judicious, but possess a readiness in communicating his ideas; and yet, having no special *thirst* after the work of the ministry, or of thus promoting the salvation of souls, he is unfit to engage in it.

Of the *first* qualification, every man must be his own judge; for who else can be acquainted with his desires and motives? Of the *last*, those with whom we stand connected. Whether we be *apt to teach*, is a question on which we ought not to decide ourselves: those are the best judges who have heard us, and been taught by us. When a congregation of

Christians invite a person to serve them in the gospel, it is a sufficient proof that they consider him as equal to the undertaking. If a person so invited be but clear as to the former qualification, I conceive he may leave the latter to the judgment of others; and conclude, that so long as a door is opened for him to preach the gospel, he is called of God to do so. *Andrew Fuller.*

THE BOOK.

I FOUND an author, whose writings were particularly directed to the subject of divine grace. The title first attracted my notice, and invited me to the perusal. But the trial it afterwards proved to me, will be (I hope) thus far useful, to caution me against curiosity in future. "It is a good thing (the apostle saith) that the heart be established with grace." Heb. xiii. 9. But it is dangerous in the unexperienced and unestablished, to be running about in quest of novelty. The leading doctrines of this writer's creed, were to this purpose: That grace is equally free and equally offered to all; the acceptance or refusal of it depended upon ourselves. And hence, that the improvement or misimprovement rests upon the will of man. That the regeneration of the Holy Ghost doth not so operate as to be irresistibly effectual, but that a man's own conduct may frustrate the life-giving power. And, lastly, the final perdition of the people of God is very possible, notwithstanding all that the everlasting love of the Father, and the infinite merits of the Redeemer, and the operation of the Holy Ghost, hath wrought, in order to prevent it.

The reader who hath accompanied me thus far in my pilgrimage, hath seen enough of my weakness not to know, that such a train of doctrine was sufficient for a time to throw a damp upon all my confidence. I am like the sensitive plant in these things; the least touch makes me recoil. To hear, therefore, of the bare possibility of falling from grace, in the close of life, and apostatizing from "him whom my soul loveth"—(and apostatize I certainly should, if the perseverance depended upon myself) what a distressful apprehension!

Neither did my trials end here. There was yet another in reserve for this season of temptation. What David remarks of the *natural* world is equally applicable to the *spiritual:* "Thou makest darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth." When the Lord withdraws his shining on the soul, the *enemy*, who knows the time of darkness to be the most favourable for his work, "walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" and never, till "the sun ariseth, will he lay him down in his den." Psal. civ. 20—22.

Hawker's Zion's Pilgrim.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

We have heard with much pleasure that a new church has been recently constituted in Boston; and that its members are in expectation of the justly celebrated Messrs. Kollock and Griffin for their pastors. If we mistake not, a bold and laudable stand will thereby be made against the divinity pretty current in the place.

In a recent letter from Mr. Clay, dated at Tranquilla, Georgia, we are informed that Mr. M'Pherson, a Pedobaptist minister, lately from Scotland, was baptized at Beaufort, South-Carolina, on the 19th of February.

We are happy to notice the recent institution of *The Young Men's Bible Society*, in New-York. The following is extracted from their advertisement of March 1, 1809, in a New-York paper:—

"The exertions which are making by so many of the servants of God in their missionary functions, and in particular the labours of that pious servant of Christ, Carey, in India, to translate the Bible into various languages of the East, deserve our highest commendation. While such are the endeavours abroad, should it not be the peculiar care as well as privilege of the American people, in the full enjoyment of religious liberty, to extend the genial influence of the scriptures to the poor of their cities, to the destitute inhabitants in newly settled places, and to the aborigines of the wilderness?

"Our intention is to distribute Bibles to regular missionaries and itinerants, in our back settlements and Indian territories; and also to assist other societies in translating the scriptures into the different languages. Notwithstanding the gloomy aspect of our public affairs, the society indulge a hope, that the community, particularly the younger part, will, so far from being regardless of our solicitations, grant their assistance in furthering the above-mentioned benevolent purposes.

"Donations, either in Bibles, Testaments, or money, will be gratefully received at the following places:—Mr. William W. Todd, 81 Front street, Mr. Henry Ten Broek, 110 William street, Mr. John Tiebout, 238 Water street, Mr. Christian Burdett, corner of Greenwich and Duane streets, Messrs. A. and E. Halstead, 140 Chatham street.

"In behalf of the society,

"HENRY JOHNSON, *Secretary.*"

FOR THE WITNESS.

REPLY TO THE REMARKS ON MR. NORTON'S SERMON.

[See the last Number, page 92.]

Messrs. Editors,

THROUGH the courtesy of a valued friend I have had the satisfaction of reading your useful publication for February, in which I found remarks on my sermon, lately published, entitled "The will of God, respecting the salvation of all men, illustrated." From the remarks, generally, in connexion with a lengthy quotation from the sermon, I was led to believe that its general character met your approbation. But I was "sorry, however, to observe" that a real or seeming difference in sentiment exists between the remarker and the writer, respecting a "sentence" in the sermon, page 8—"God requires of men, repentance of sin, faith in the gospel, and obedience to its precepts, *as a condition* of salvation." The remarker observes by way of objection to this sentence, "It is presumed that repentance and faith are the gift of God, and that obedience is the evidence that these are bestowed. They are not, *therefore*,

required of sinners as the terms on which God will bestow his favour." Repentance and faith, it is readily conceded, are the "gift of God." But does it from *this consideration* follow, that they are not required as the *condition*, or *as terms* of salvation? It is believed that it does not. As the dependence of the sinner on God for repentance and faith, does not destroy, nor in the least degree weaken his obligation to repent and believe; so neither, it is believed, does it supersede the idea that his salvation is suspended on the condition that he exercise these divine graces.

The remarker further observes, and apparently with the design to shew the impropriety of the "sentence" under consideration, that "God loves his people while enemies to him, and produces a radical change in the temper of their hearts, by his word and Spirit, before they have one right moral exercise." Should the several ideas comprised in these observations be admitted as just, yet the writer of the exceptionable sentence is not so happy as to discern the force of argument, they are supposed to contain against the propriety of that sentence. He would, however, with deference ask, whether it be proper to say that "God *loves* his people while they are *enemies to him?*" That God loves *all* his rational creatures, whether they be or be not denominated "his people," with the love of *benevolence*, is readily admitted. Hence he gave his only begotten Son to die for them; but that he loves "his people" with *complacency* or *approbation* while enemies to him, ought not, it is believed, to be conceded; because previously to "a radical change in the temper of their hearts," they are children of wrath as well as others; they possess the same moral character, which is altogether sinful; the same hearts which are enmity against God, and fully set in them to do evil. Does the all holy God, who "is angry with the wicked every day, and who hateth all the workers of iniquity," love, with complacency or approbation, such characters? The subject, as deserving very serious consderation, is seriously and respectfully submitted.

The writer of this, would further ask whether it can be said with strict propriety that God produces a radical change in the hearts of his people, "*before* they have *one right moral exercise?*" What is the nature of this change? Does it not consist in hatred of sin, love of God, &c.? But does not this

suppose moral exercise of heart? Is not moral exercise then simultaneous with, or rather the essence of a radical change of heart? Were these queries clearly discussed and correctly decided, no inconsiderable perplexity and confusion would be removed from the minds of many readers. While the above remarks are sufficiently explicit to shew what are the sentiments of the writer, he would be far from claiming any dominion over the faith of others. In making these suggestions, his principal object has been to excite that candid attention to the subject under review, which will be likely to lead to the developement of truth.

The remarker further observes, that "if it had been said sinners cannot be saved without faith and repentance, it would have accorded better with divine truth"—"But it by no means follows, that because they are duties, they are conditions of salvation." If the remarker supposed that the author of the sermon intended to insinuate that repentance and faith are the meritorious ground of the sinner's salvation, he mistook, and, to the author, unaccountably mistook his meaning. This ground, he readily grants, was laid by "the Saviour in his obedience unto death." God, it is admitted, neither pardons, justifies, nor saves the sinner, for the sake of his faith and repentance, or because these exercises give him any claim on the footing of merit, to pardon, justification and life. In conferring these great and unspeakable blessings on the repentant and believing sinner, God has respect to the obedience, the righteousness, or the atonement of Jesus Christ. And this indeed is the only meritorious consideration of their bestowment. Thus salvation is wholly of grace, through Christ the Saviour. This is a doctrine worthy of the most joyful acceptation. And thus it is, indeed, accepted by all the genuine friends of evangelical truth, whatever may be their denomination, because it is humbling to the sinner, and honorary to God the Saviour.

But because "the Saviour by his obedience unto death" has prepared the way for the consistent and honourable bestowment of salvation upon his people, does it follow that salvation will be actually bestowed independent of the exercise of repentance and faith, *as the condition*, on their part, of the bestowment? Whatever is necessary to be performed on the part of the sinner in order either to his present, or

future acceptance with God through Christ, may, it is conceived, with much propriety be called the *condition* of that acceptance. In no other sense was it expected that the word as used by the author of the sermon under consideration, would be understood. If it were otherwise understood by the remarker, he laboured under an unhappy mistake. But if in this sense he understood the word, there appears to be a wide difference in sentiment between him and the author of that sermon, on the subject in question.

JACOB NORTON.

Weymouth, March 3, 1809.

Want of room obliges us to postpone, until the next number, the remarks which were prepared to accompany the foregoing. We conceive it of great importance that the subject should be fully understood, and have therefore readily inserted Mr. Norton's reply, although we are not so happy as to perceive that our objections to the *exceptionable terms* are removed. A temperate, scriptural discussion will doubtless be beneficial in its consequences, under God, to our readers, our correspondents, and ourselves.

EDITORS.

REMARKS

On a Work, entitled, "The Baptism of Believers only, and the Particular Communion of the Baptized Churches explained and vindicated. In Three Parts. By THOMAS BALDWIN. 340 pp. 12mo. Manning & Loring.

IN the first section of the first part, the author shows the injustice of some aspersions which have been cast upon the Baptists for refusing communion with other denominations. One of the charges brought against them is, that they substitute baptism in the room of redeeming blood; and another, that they make the want of a little water, a bar to communion. In regard to the first, it must be well known to those who are acquainted with the sentiments of the regular Baptists, that they are so far from supposing baptism a saving ordinance, that they consider no person a proper subject of it, who does not make a credible profes-

sion of true repentance, and faith in the Redeemer. And as to the idea that they make the want of a little water, a hindrance to communion, it is a fact known and read of all men, that they acknowledge no ceremony which is called baptism, however solemnly performed, to answer the gospel command, which does not amount to an immersion of the whole body. The nature of a gospel church is also clearly delineated from the New Testament, and evidence from thence is exhibited, that it must be composed of "lively stones," or persons regenerated by the Holy Ghost. Of course, all those churches which do not require their members to give evidence that they are born from above, and all those which reckon amongst their number the infants of believers or unbelievers, are not built upon the plan of the primitive gospel churches.

In the second section, it is made to appear that immersion is the divine appointment, and that every ceremony for baptism which is contrary, must be of human invention; because no proof can be exhibited that the apostles ever practised infant sprinkling, or immersed any who did not give evidence of real repentance, by a credible profession of faith in Christ Jesus. Baptism is also proved to be a positive institution of the Saviour, not to be altered by any of his creatures. "We profess," says the author, "to take the word of God for a perfect rule of faith and practice; if so, we are not to follow the opinions of the best of men, though ever so learned and great, any further than they follow Christ, or walk according to his institutions."—"We must be the most inconsistent set of Christians in the world, to hold up the necessity of baptism by our profession, and yet when we come to the Lord's table, practically deny it, by receiving those to our communion, whom we do not hesitate to tell the world we look upon as unbaptized persons."

In the third section, several arguments against particular communion are answered. One, which has much force with many persons, namely, *sincerity*, receives more particular attention. It is supposed that the person desiring communion with Baptists, is a Christian, who *sincerely* believes that he was baptized in infancy, and as *sincerely* declares that he has never seen that it was his duty to be immersed. Our author demonstrates the weakness of this argument by an exhibition of primitive practice, and from thence

stating this simple proposition, that "*sincerity* is not the term of communion; but a being conformed to the apostles' doctrine, and continuing stedfastly therein." If sincerity were the term of communion, persons might be admitted who deny baptism in every mode. This first part is concluded with an affectionate address to the Baptist churches, exhorting them to a friendly conduct towards those who differ from them, and to unity and love amongst themselves.

The second part is a reply to the "Friendly Letter" of the Rev. Noah Worcester to the author, in which Mr. W. had attacked the sentiments vindicated in the first part. The first section of the second part contains a few preliminary observations on the subject in dispute. The second exhibits testimony to prove, that the New-Testament does not afford the least countenance to the practice of baptizing any persons but those who make a credible profession of true godliness. And as visible believers are the only proper subjects of baptism, and as such commanded to be baptized, the author shows the absurdity of their neglecting this positive institution of the great Lawgiver and King in Zion. He avails himself of the observations of Bishop Butler and President Edwards on the nature of positive institutions. The latter has observed, that "such precepts are the greatest and most proper trial of obedience, because in them the mere authority and will of the Legislator is the sole ground of the obligation." The author then notices the impropriety of attempting to prove the obligation to any practices, from the "silence of scripture." The third section testifies that John's baptism was not under the Jewish dispensation; but that it was, as described in the first chapter of Mark, "The *beginning* of the gospel of Jesus Christ." The fourth section is on the mode of baptism. Here evidence is again brought forward, that the primitive Christians practised no other mode than immersion; and extracts from several eminent Pedobaptists are inserted, which testify the meaning of the word *baptizo* to be, to dip or plunge. The fifth section shows the manner in which the ordinance was reduced from immersion to sprinkling; and that it was not from any divine authority, but from the unscriptural notion of conforming to convenience, instead of attending to the law and to the testimony. The sixth section is upon godly sin-

cerity as connected with external obedience. Here the author demonstrates that the word of God, and not sincerity, is the rule of duty; and he very justly discards the popular idea, that a man can be accepted as obedient, who *sincerely* practises in any particular contrary to divine revelation. His opponent had made this observation: 'Granting that immersion be the appointed mode of baptism, and believers the only proper subjects, yet if a Pedobaptist really think otherwise, and with an obedient heart offer up his children in our mode, the person in so doing is as well accepted in the sight of God, as though his outward conduct had been according to the appointed mode of baptism.' To which our author replies, "Granting this, and I beg to know what foundation pedobaptism stands upon! If it be not supported by divine appointment, it can have no other origin than human tradition; and consequently must fall to the ground; unless you can make it appear that your sincere opinion is of equal authority with divine appointments." "Is it reasonable to suppose, that God would make appointments for his people which he did not think proper for them to observe? Or has he left discretionary orders with any man, or any body of men, to set aside, alter, or amend any of his positive institutions?"

For the present we close our remarks, and shall pursue them in a future number; merely observing, that to us the work appears scriptural, argumentative, condensing much historical information; and we consider it a valuable acquisition to those who are candidly seeking information respecting Christian practice.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Our valued friend at North Yarmouth will accept our warmest thanks for his persevering and successful attention to this infant undertaking.

Cyprian's number on searching the Scriptures is unavoidably postponed until next month.

Erastus on conformity to the world, Quartus' original letter, Junia on conformity to the death of Christ, and several other valuable communications, shall have early insertion.